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In re Application of KNIGHTS et al :
U.S. Application No.: 10/500,318 :
PCT Application No.: PCT/GB02/05930 : DECISION
Int. Filing Date: 27 December 2002 :
Priority Date Claimed: 27 December 2001 :
Attorney Docket No.: SGU-0068 :
For: AN IN-LINE LIGHT SENSOR :

This is in response to applicant's "Petition to Accept Declaration of an Application Without the Signature of a Refusing Inventor Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.47 and MPEP § 409.03(a)" filed 09 May 2005.

BACKGROUND

On 27 December 2002, applicant filed international application PCT/GB02/05930, which claimed priority of an earlier United Kingdom application filed 27 December 2001. A copy of the international application was communicated to the USPTO from the International Bureau on 24 July 2003. The thirty-month period for paying the basic national fee in the United States expired on 28 June 2004 (27 June 2004 was a Sunday).

On 28 June 2004, applicant filed national stage papers in the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US). The submission was accompanied by, *inter alia*, the basic national fee required by 35 U.S.C. 371(c)(1).

On 11 January 2005, the DO/EO/US mailed a Notification of Missing Requirements Under 35 U.S.C. 371 (Form PCT/DO/EO/905), which indicated that an oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.497 must be filed.

On 09 May 2005, applicant filed the present petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a).

DISCUSSION

A petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) must be accompanied by: (1) an oath or declaration by each applicant on his or her own behalf and on behalf of the nonsigning joint inventors, (2) factual proof that the missing joint inventors refuse to join in the application or cannot be reached after diligent effort, (3) the fee set forth in §1.17(i), and (4) the last known addresses of the nonsigning joint inventors.

With regard to item (1) above, applicant has submitted declarations signed by the available inventors each on his own behalf and on behalf of the nonsigning inventor Adrian Vonsovici.

With regard to item (2) above, MPEP 409.03(d) states in relevant part,

Where a refusal to sign the application papers is alleged, the circumstances of this refusal must be specified in an affidavit or declaration by the person to whom the refusal was made. Statements by a party not present when an oral refusal is made will not be accepted.

Before a refusal can be alleged, it must be demonstrated that a bona fide attempt was made to present a copy of the application papers (specification, including claims, drawings, and oath or declaration) to the nonsigning inventor for signature. A copy of the application papers should be sent to the last known address of the nonsigning inventor, or, if the nonsigning inventor is represented by counsel, to the address of the nonsigning inventor's attorney.

When there is an express oral refusal, that fact along with the time and place of the refusal must be stated in the affidavit or declaration. When there is an express written refusal, a copy of the document evidencing that refusal must be made part of the affidavit or declaration.

When it is concluded by the 37 CFR 1.47 applicant that a nonsigning inventor's conduct constitutes a refusal, all facts upon which that conclusion is based should be stated in the affidavit or declaration. If there is documentary evidence to support facts alleged in the affidavit or declaration, such evidence should be submitted. Whenever a nonsigning inventor gives a reason for refusing to sign the application oath or declaration, that reason should be stated in the affidavit or declaration.

The petition states that inventor Vonsovici refuses to sign the application papers. Petitioner has adequately demonstrated that a bona fide attempt was made to present a copy of the application papers to Vonsovici for signature (see affidavit of Haydn Jones, ¶3). However, the petition does not sufficiently establish that Vonsovici refuses to sign. Specifically, the electronic mail communication from Vonsovici dated 08 February 2005 appears to indicate that Vonsovici would be willing to sign under certain conditions. Furthermore, the electronic mail reply dated 24 February 2005 does not set a response date and does not indicate that a failure to respond, without conditions, by the established date will be treated as a refusal to sign. Thus, it would not be reasonable to conclude at the present time that Vonsovici refuses to join in the application.

With regard to item (3) above, applicant has provided \$130.00 towards the requisite petition fee. Applicant is advised that effective 22 November 2004, the fee for a petition under 37 CFR 1.47 increased to \$200.00. \$70.00 will be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0607 as authorized by applicant.

With regard to item (4) above, the petition states the last known address of the nonsigning inventor.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons above, the petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) is DISMISSED without prejudice.

If reconsideration on the merits of this petition is desired, a proper response must be filed within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time are available under 37 CFR 1.136(a). Any reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition Under 37 CFR 1.47(a)". No additional petition fee is required.

Please direct further correspondence with respect to this matter to Mail Stop PCT, Commissioner for Patents, Office of PCT Legal Administration, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, with the contents of the letter marked to the attention of the Office of PCT Legal Administration.



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